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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CORPS, SFWMD REDUCE LAKE OKEECHOBEE DISCHARGES TO ESTUARIES

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – With lake levels no longer rising, water managers for the Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District will decrease water releases today from Lake Okeechobee. The lake elevation is at 16.93 feet, which is in Zone C of the Water Supply and Environmental Regulation Schedule.

Discharges to the estuaries will be reduced up to 3,500 cubic feet per second at St. Lucie Lock and Dam (S-80) on the St. Lucie Canal and to 6,500 cubic feet per second at Moore Haven Lock and Dam (S-77) on the Caloosahatchee River. As inflows continue to decline, discharges will be reduced to up 2,500 cubic feet per second at S-80 and to 4,500 cubic feet per second at S-77.

The Lake Okeechobee area is experiencing a reprieve from rising water levels thanks to recent below normal rainfall in the watershed and increased evaporation due to plentiful sunshine. The wet season is not over, but Hurricane Isabel's path provided some drier air following a wet season that has so far seen above normal rainfall and runoff. The downward transitioning of discharges is intended to maintain the recession in Lake Okeechobee water levels that has just begun.

Water level data for Lake Okeechobee and the Central and Southern Florida Project can be found on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Water Management and Meteorology Section Homepage at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/>.